

Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

National, Regional and State Updates

January 2016



Photos by Laura Kington

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As we celebrate the new year, we want to say a big ‘thank you’ to everyone who helped make farm to school a reality in their community. Winter – the middle of the school year, the off-season for many farmers – is a great time to forge connections for local food procurement or to plan a school garden. Read on for a recap of 2015, and some of our plans for this new year! Happy holidays.

OHIO FARM TO SCHOOL 2015 in Review

By Carol Smathers
Ohio Farm to School State Lead

Statewide Objective

Farm to School initiatives are recognized to be good for producers and local economies. Well-presented and tastily prepared local foods are appealing to students. Did you realize that Farm to School efforts are also part of the state's plan to prevent and reduce chronic disease? In January 2015, the Ohio Chronic Disease Collaborative (OCDC) Healthy Food Access group facilitated by the Ohio Department of Health renewed its commitment to:

Increase the number of Ohio school districts participating in a comprehensive Farm to School (F2S) Program.

Statewide Conference

Ohio's statewide biennial Farm to School conference was held March 5, 2015. The conference theme was "Local Foods across the School Meal Tray". We had great attendance (over 150 individuals) despite the cold, snow, and Level 3 snow emergencies in parts of Ohio that day. The conference included plenary speakers focused on procurement methods and success stories and panel discussions about serving local foods in schools, each focused on a particular food group. The lunch included locally-sourced items. The day concluded with a student "cook-off" using locally-sourced ingredients.

We received many comments from presenters and participants about how much they learned, how many worthwhile connections they made, and how smoothly the day went. The "food group panels", they commented, helped open discussions about what is possible related to marketing each of the food categories to schools.



Farm to School Month and the Ohio Apple Crunch

Across the state—and across the Midwest region—groups celebrated their schools' access to local foods by crunching on local apples together and posting the photos on social media. Large districts like Columbus City Schools celebrated Farm to School month in October by putting up posters in their cafeterias to highlight local foods.

Students crunching at Loveland City Schools



Strategic Planning

The Ohio Farm to School Advisory Group began a strategic planning process for 2016. This included a presentation by Natalie Talis, a Policy Associate with the National Farm to School Network, about policies that support or hinder Farm to School efforts and discussions about which policy efforts are needed in Ohio. See the next page of this newsletter for information about and ways you can be involved in stakeholder discussions and regional workshops in 2016.

Good-Bye, Welcome, and Thanks

A huge expression of thanks goes to Stacy Haight, an OSU Graduate Associate who helped redesign the Ohio Farm to School website, coordinated regional workshops, poured her heart and soul into organizing the details of the March conference. A big welcome goes to Laura Kington who joined us in September. She has a degree in Environment and Natural Resources and lots of experience working on local foods issues. And finally, many thanks to the F2S Advisory Group, conference speakers, and volunteers whose efforts are helping to increase the number of Ohio school districts participating in Farm to School procurement and education.

May your blessings be local in 2016!

Carol Smathers

Participants in the 2015 Farm to School Conference Cook-Off



Ohio Farm to School Update

Happy New Year! We are so excited for what 2016 has in store.

Thank you to all who joined us in fall 2015 to help craft our plans...

Our advisory board met on December 10th to review and develop plans for Ohio Farm to School in 2016. We broke into three stakeholder groups to brainstorm: parents, producers, and OSU Extension.

Some needs and 'resolutions' were identified...

- Many different resources are needed, like ones that: help parents understand their school's capacity for farm to school projects; help food service staff rework their menus to include local foods and save money; help producers and processors know which products to focus on if they want to sell to schools...
 - So, we're leveraging our national farm to school network and working with local stakeholders to identify what's already out there, to develop new Ohio-centric resources, and to host it all on our website!
- Mentoring relationships, learning networks, and examples of successful Ohio projects are needed...
 - So, we'll be putting out a new success story every month – working to highlight diverse stories from different regions, types of school districts, and led by different champions.

Join us at our regional workshops next October...

In farm to school month 2016 (October!), we will convene six regional workshops across Ohio. At each workshop, we will share regional success stories and provide trainings and resources, as well as facilitate relationship-building between parents, producers, food service staff, and other farm to school stakeholders!

And in the meantime, stay in touch...and help us plan!

We'll be holding various stakeholder input calls every other month this year – let us know if you want to be involved by emailing Laura at Kington.10@osu.edu. Our first calls will be for producers on January 26th at 3pm and for parents on February 2nd at 10am.

News & Resources

State, Regional and National

Congratulations to Cuyahoga County District Board of Health!

The FY 2016 USDA Farm to School grants have been announced! The Cuyahoga County District Board of Health has been awarded \$100,000 to engage multiple school districts in an effort to expand their farm to school programs. The project will facilitate connections and leverage partnerships across the supply chain to improve access to healthy, locally grown foods and to strengthen the regional food system's economy, enhance connections to the classroom, and create a Harvest of the Month program. Read more about all the awarded grants [here](#).

Inside School Food Podcasts

The only podcast serving an audience of K-12 nutrition professionals and others working in school food—in the supply chain, and in advocacy, policy, and research. Join expert guests from all over the nation to explore topics across a spectrum of concerns: coping with regulation, relieving hunger, meeting sustainability goals, and creating kid-friendly menus that are fresh, healthy, delicious, and affordable. Inside School Food is a production of the listener-supported Heritage Radio Network, a unique Internet station committed to archiving, protecting, and advancing our country's rich food culture through programs that give voice to America's leading food professionals, farmers, policy experts, artists, and tastemakers. You can listen to all five seasons on line now: insideschoolfood.com

CDC releases Parents for Healthy Schools toolkit

Parents have a powerful role in supporting children's health and learning. Engaged parents help guide their children successfully through school, advocate for their children, and can help shape a healthy school environment. CDC has developed a set of resources called Parents for Healthy Schools to help schools and school groups (e.g., parent teacher associations (PTA), parent teacher organizations (PTO), school wellness committees) engage parents to create healthy school environments. Access the toolkit here: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/parentengagement/parentsforhealthyschools.htm>

School Wellness Materials – ¡En Español!

Action For Healthy Kids has updated their school wellness materials in Spanish! Access the materials at actionforhealthykids.org/Spanish or actionforhealthykids.org/Padres

Granville hosts 'farm to school' event

Newark Advocate - Local food producers got their chance to show middle and high school students where some of their food comes from in the second "Farm to School/Food Manufacturer to School" event, November 17. Representatives from Bird's Haven Farms, Trillium Farms, and Ballreich Potato Chip Co., spoke to students during their lunch periods about what they do, and why supporting locally produced food is important. Read more here:

<http://www.newarkadvocate.com/story/news/education/2015/11/17/granville-hosts-farm-school-event/75897918/>

News & Resources

State, Regional and National

Lights, Camera, Breakfast! Contest & Funding Opportunity

The Lights, Camera, Breakfast Contest gives schools the opportunity to highlight their alternative school breakfast programs that help students start the school day with a nutritious meal. Eligible schools are invited to showcase their alternative school breakfast programs in action through a creative 1-minute video that could win them a grand prize of \$5,000 to put toward their school breakfast and health and wellness programming. Videos will be judged based on creativity, overall quality of submission, the best demonstration of alternative breakfast, and connection to the School Nutrition Association's 2016 National School Breakfast Week theme of "Wake Up to School Breakfast."

Deadline: January 8

Learn more and apply: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/events/lights-camera-breakfast>

Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum

The semester-long Farm to School Youth Leadership curriculum is designed to empower high school students and engage them in meaningful, hands-on learning activities that also strengthen their school's Farm to School program and link them directly with farmers in their community. Available here: <http://www.iatp.org/documents/farm-to-school-youth-leadership-curriculum-all-lessons-and-worksheets>

USDA 2015 Farm to School Census: Early Results Are In!

The new USDA data show growing farm to school efforts help to reduce plate waste and increase student participation in healthier school meals program. We will be sharing more about the census results in the coming months; read the first reports from the USDA in the meantime by visiting their website: <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/news/new-usda-data-show-growing-farm-school-efforts-help-reduce-plate-waste-increase-student>

On-going resources:

- Finding local farms, buyers, or restaurants that purchase/ serve local foods, visit **Ohio MarketMaker**: www.ohiomarketmaker.com*
- Finding farms in and around Ohio that sell directly to the public through local farmers' markets, CSA's, and on-farm sales, visit **OEFFA's Good Earth Guide** [OEFFA's searchable on-line directory](#).*
- Farm to School Webinars: National Good Food Network Website:**
<http://www.ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-cluster-calls/farm-to-school>
NGFN offers four recorded webinars on the topic of Farm to School at this time: "Food Hubs and Farm to School", "Market-Based Models for Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Defining What Works", "School Food FOCUS", and "National Farm to School Network". You can also sign up from their website to receive notice of upcoming webinars.
- GroundWorks Community** URL: www.edweb.net/schoolgardens
- Ohio Proud** is a resource for identifying local farms and food producers: <http://www.ohioproud.org/>

Get Ready Now!

Prepare to Apply for the National Farm to School Grant

Exciting news: the USDA is hoping to triple the funding available for its 2017 round of national farm to school grants. The Request for Applications (RFA) will be released in the coming months, and now is the perfect time to prepare to apply. You can help to ensure your project earns a share of the available funds by doing the following now:

1. Gather your team!

- Recruit a dedicated, diverse team of teachers, administrators, school food professionals, and parents from your school to develop a plan of action. If your school has a School Wellness Team, that's a great place to start.

2. Find a grant writer

- An experienced grant writer can save you time and help to ensure that your application communicates your vision clearly while meeting the application requirements.

3. Connect with supporting organizations

- Taking time to develop relationships with local organizations can be key to a successful long-term farm to school project. Find professional partners in your community who share in your vision.

The purpose of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program is to assist eligible entities in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. In past years, the USDA has awarded up to \$5 million in competitive grants for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs.

The USDA shares grant program information through their Farm to School E-letter. Sign up here to stay up-to-date on the FY2017 RFA and National Farm to School Program.

Check out the archived FY2016 RFA and find more guidance here:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school-grant-program>

On-Going Funding Opportunities

Fruit Tree Planting Foundation - Orchard Donations

The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF) is dedicated to planting fruitful trees and plants to alleviate world hunger, combat global warming, strengthen communities, and improve the surrounding air, soil, and water. FTPF programs donate orchards where the harvest will best serve communities for generations, at places such as community gardens, public schools, city/state parks, low-income neighborhoods, Native American reservations, international hunger relief sites, and animal sanctuaries. Recipients must be nonprofits, public schools, or government entities. In addition, the "Fruit Tree 101" program creates outdoor edible orchard classrooms at public schools of all levels, across the country, to provide generations of students with environmental education opportunities and a source of organic fruit for improved school lunch nutrition.

Deadline: Rolling

Home Depot's Retool Your School - Campus Improvement Grant

Home Depot's Retool Your School program provides grants through a two-tier structure for campus and facility improvements at historically black colleges and universities. The program awards Tier I and Tier II grants based on a combination of consumer voting and advisory board panel selections. The college with the highest score will receive a \$50,000 Tier I grant; thirteen other applicants will receive Tier II grants of \$10,000 each. An additional three Campus Pride grants of \$25,000 each will be awarded to the schools with the most votes and social media activity, as determined by Home Depot. Grant funds will go toward an improvement project at each school that is likely to have impact on the lives of students, faculty, and alumni for generations to come. **Deadline: Rolling**

Awesome Food \$1000 Project Grants

Each month, Awesome Food will give one applicant \$1,000 to help pull off an awesome idea involving food. The ideas must relate to food in some form, and the definition will be more inclusive than exclusive. Examples could include educating the public about DIY-farming, creating an ad-hoc eatery in a subway car, or recording videos of immigrants' recipes. Anyone is eligible to apply: for profit, nonprofit, individuals, companies, schools, adults and children. Applications are reviewed as they are received. One grant is awarded each month.

Deadline: Rolling

Let's Move Salad Bars to School Foundation believes that salad bars + schools = more fruits and vegetables for children. They could get a free salad bar (or multiples for multiple school sites) into your schools by end of November. A fairly easy application is now open, and must be initiated by the school district nutrition director. For great ideas for other equipment, recipes and procedures with real-world examples go to <http://www.saladbars2schools.org/>

Deadline: Rolling

Simply Organic 1%

The Simply Organic 1% fund supports and promotes the growth of organic and sustainable agriculture, including research, education and efficient/quality improvement projects.

Deadline: Rolling

On-Going Funding Opportunities

Scotties Facial Tissues annual Video and Essay Contest: TREES ROCK!

Did you know that Scotties Facial Tissues (which plant 3 Trees for Every 1 they use) puts on an annual Video and Essay Contest called TREES ROCK!? The contest is for 3rd through 8th graders in the 50 United States and Washington D.C. They are sure you are always looking for ways to engage your kids in the classroom or in a club. TREES ROCK! is an excellent way to get kids to be creative on their own or as a team when learning about trees and the environment.

There are lots of prizes to be won and 2 schools will receive \$10,000. To learn more, check out their videos on the Growing School Gardens Home Page. To download all of the important documents to get started, go to www.scottiestreesrock.com

Deadline: Rolling

Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes

Anyone can now enter on behalf of a Pre-K or elementary school to win our annual Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes. Entering once a day, everyday increases the chance to make a big difference at a local school. Enter today! Little kids have a chance to make big changes too! Pre-K Schools and Head Start programs are eligible to enter to win a Smart from the Start Award. Ten schools will be awarded a \$2,500 grant and one grand prize winning school will receive a \$20,000 grant. The grants go toward making healthy improvements at the school, and incorporating energy balance concepts into classrooms.

Learn more at <http://www.togethercounts.com/at-school/win-for-your-school/sweepstakes>

Deadline: Rolling

USDA Requests Applications for Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center

This grant will support strategies to reduce child food insecurity in rural communities.

Deadline: Rolling

The Pollination Project is a nonprofit organization that provides \$1,000 seed grants to individual change makers. The Project has granted numerous awards to various small agriculture related operations who want to bring change into a community. The Project has received repeated media reports on how the organization is impacting small agricultural practices. New grants are awarded daily and there is no deadline for when to apply. We hope to have someone from the Project speak at a future meeting.

Deadline: Rolling

Micro-Grants/ Karma for Cara Foundation

These grants are awarded to children 18 and under to fund service projects in their communities, with ideas including rebuilding a playground or turning a vacant lot into a community garden.

Go to

http://www.ysa.org/karma_for_cara_foundation

Deadline: Rolling

Events & Webinars

Winter is a great time for food and agriculture conferences...

Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association Annual Conference

February 13 – 14, 2016

Granville, Ohio

Ohio's largest sustainable agriculture conference will feature keynote speakers, approximately 100 workshops, local and organic meals, full-day pre-conference events, a kids' conference, childcare, a trade show, and Saturday evening entertainment. This year's conference theme is "Growing Right by Nature", and keynote speakers will be Lindsey Lusher Shute from the National Young Farmers Coalition and John Ikerd, expert and author in agricultural economics.

Registration will open in December.

More info at <http://www.oeffa.org/conference2016.php>

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Annual Conference

January 27 – 30, 2016

Lexington, Kentucky

The Southern SAWG's 25th Annual Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms conference will be in Lexington, Kentucky, just a couple hours south of Cincinnati. With several sessions focusing on farm to school, consider attending these year's accessibly located conference. This popular event draws over 1,000 farmers and local food advocates from across the nation, offering outstanding "field-tested" presenters, a full slate of hot-topic conference sessions and pre-conference courses, several field trips, a poster display and a trade show.

More info and to register: <https://ssawg.squarespace.com/january-2016-conference/>

Young Agricultural Professionals Winter Conference – Taking Root Leadership Experience

January 29 – 30, 2016 | Register by December 14

Hyatt Regency

Columbus, Ohio

Cost: \$100 per person (no hotel room); \$150 per person (hotel room); \$200 for two people (sharing a hotel room).

Join Farm Bureau's Young Ag Professionals ages 18 to 35 for a time of personal and professional development, meet other young professionals from around Ohio and enjoy fun, food and fellowship. You do not need to be a farmer to attend, but you do need to be a Farm Bureau member.

More info and to register: <http://www.experienceyap.com/>

Save the Date! National Farm to Cafeteria Conference June 2016

Save the date for the 2016 National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, to be held June 2-4, 2016 in Madison, Wisconsin. The National Farm to Cafeteria Conference is a biennial event that convenes a diverse group of stakeholders from across the farm to cafeteria movement who are working to source local food for institutional cafeterias and foster a culture of food and agricultural literacy across America. The conference is hosted by the National Farm to School Network, in partnership with local host organizations. More information to come soon.

<http://www.farmtoschool.org/our-work/farm-to-school-cafeteria-conference>

Southeast Ohio Farm to School conference

March 3 - 4 | The Plains, OH

Join Southeast Ohio food system partners for the 2016 Southeast Ohio Farm to School Conference! Gather with your peers in a two-day, extensive conference that will cover all things Farm to School! Ohio Continuing Education Units Available.

Topics Covered will include:

- Farm to School Procurement
- School Gardens
- Food Safety
- Food Service Staff Training
- Sourcing Local Food
- Healthy Food Curriculum
- Food Policy
- Appalachian Regional Success Stories
- and MUCH MORE!

For more information on the conference schedule, classes, and registration: stay tuned to www.ohiofoodshed.org or contact Rosemary Roe at rosr@acenetworks.com or 740-753-4900

Webinar: Maximize Your Procurement Dollars through Regional Purchasing: School Food and Forward Contracting

Available online now!

Forward contracting establishes a price to be paid for a certain quantity of product to be provided at a future date. Learn how forward contracting can help maximize your procurement budget and support local farmers at the same time.

Speakers will highlight the benefits and challenges of forward contracting school food, and demonstrate how to write forward contracts.

Hosted by School Food FOCUS

http://www.schoolfoodfocus.org/2015-12-10-13-00-maximize-your-procurement-dollars-through-regional-purchasing_-school-food-and-forward-contracting/

USDA Resources

Dig in to USDA Team Nutrition resources!

Team Nutrition offers a variety of materials that can enhance your farm to school program, including curriculum, event ideas, posters, and stickers. All Team Nutrition materials are available for download on the website and print copies can be provided for free to any school operating the National School Lunch Program. Go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>

Here are a few of our favorites:

- **Dig In! Standards-Based Nutrition Education from the Ground Up:** Explore a world of possibilities in the garden and on your plate using ten inquiry-based lessons to engage 5th and 6th graders in growing, harvesting, tasting, and learning about fruits and vegetables.
- **The Great Garden Detective Adventure:** Discover what fruits and vegetables are sweetest, crunchiest, and juiciest through a series of investigations and fun experiences connecting the school garden to the classroom, cafeteria, and home with this eleven-lesson curriculum for 3rd and 4th graders.
- **Popular Events Idea Booklet:** Discover fun ways to promote nutrition and physical activity at your elementary or middle school with ideas for 20 themed events, from scavenger hunts to try-day Fridays!
- **Make Today a Try-Day! Stickers:** Use these fun stickers as part of your taste-testing event and order posters to match!

Tools for Schools is an online toolkit where you can find all of USDA's best resources on school meal topics (e.g., fruits and vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, and reducing sodium) and implementing Smart Snacks. In the toolkit, you will find policy documents, nutrition education materials, Smarter Lunchroom strategies, kid-friendly recipes, and success stories from other schools. Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools>

USDA Local Food Directories

Local and regional food systems, including farmers markets, are one of USDA's four key pillars to revitalize rural economies and improve access to fresh, healthy food for millions of Americans. Four USDA Local Food Directories are now available online to give potential customers, business partners and community planners easy, one-stop access to the most current information about sources of local foods. The four directories are: National Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Enterprise Directory, National Food Hub Directory, National On-Farm Market Directory, and National Farmers Market Directory. For more information on the launch: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2014/09/30/the-easy-way-to-find-local-food-usda-launches-new-local-food-directories/>

The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit

Just getting started with farm to school? The USDA has a comprehensive, easy to understand guide for how to begin a farm to school project. The Farm to School Planning Toolkit guides you through questions to consider and helpful resources to reference when starting or growing a farm to school program. It is designed for use by schools, school districts, and community partners. The toolkit is filled with tips and examples, insights from others, and lists of resources for further research. Each school district is unique, so browse the topics to find the resources most relevant to you and your implementation team! Visit http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S_Planning_Kit.pdf

Thank you to all of our partners and supporters!



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